



March 4, 2025

**The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair**

Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: SB 634 – Hunting - Nonlead Ammunition, et cet. - FAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Wildlife for All, a national organization to transform state wildlife management to prioritize the protection of all wildlife species and ecosystems, we urge you to support SB 634 to phase out the use of lead ammunition for hunting in Maryland.

The science is beyond question: lead bullets cause harm to wildlife and humans. With safer, affordable, and high-performance alternatives available, it's time to move past the ammunition of the past to a solution that benefits us all.

**Lead ammunition harms non-target wild animals.**

A 2022 study in *Science* examined 1,210 bald and golden eagles across 38 states and found that nearly half of them had “bone lead concentrations above thresholds for chronic poisoning.”

**For humans or wildlife, no amount of lead in our environment is safe.**

Lead bullets pose a serious health threat to hunters and their families. Fragments of lead are very difficult to remove from meat. Lead “can lead to a variety of neurological disorders in humans, such as brain damage, mental retardation, behavioral problems, nerve damage, and possibly Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and schizophrenia,” according to the National Institutes of Health.

**Lead phase-outs work, and alternative ammo available and cost-effective.**

California phased out all lead ammunition in 2019, with documented beneficial effects on wildlife and no disruption in hunting participation. Nationwide, millions of hunters already use alternative forms of ammunition, with lead alternatives such as steel, copper, and bismuth widely available, and often cheaper than premium lead.

USFWS banned lead shot for waterfowl hunting in 1991. Lead poisoning mortality for mallards dropped by nearly two-thirds, protecting ducks and leaving more wildlife alive for all wildlife stakeholders.

Thank you for giving this issue your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Lute". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michelle" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Lute".

Michelle L. Lute, PhD

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | Wildlife for All**